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Title: Need to sanction special financial package for the backward districts of Odisha.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): I stand here to express my anguish relating to certain issues of my State. The matter relates to injustice meted out to Odisha by not providing adequate funds for the development of the backward districts of my State, specially those districts which have been affected by Left Wing extremist activities.

Recently, the Union Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved a special package of Rs.8750 crore for five years for the development of backward districts of West Bengal. Odisha, on the other hand, has a provision of only Rs.340 crore under the Backward Region Grant Fund for 2011-12. For 19 backward districts, approximately Rs.1700 crore have been allocated over five years. One can find out how much Orissa is being neglected by this comparison with West Bengal which has received Rs.8750 crore and Odisha has received for 19 backward districts only Rs.1700 crore for the next five years.

Our proposal for the continuation of the special package for KBK districts in the 12^{th} Plan has not been considered so far. Would it not seem to the Government that this is injustice? Naturally we feel that every part of India should get benefit under the Backward Region Grant Fund, but the disparity between Rs.8750 crore and Rs.1700 crore seems to be quite glaring. We have little quarrel with West Bengal or even Bihar which had received a package a few months back. The Government may give them as much money as they desire to. But similar package may be provided to Odisha also. Odisha is also a part of this country. Why does this UPA Government discriminate against Odisha? Is it because it is not with UPA? Is it because it has repeatedly defeated Congress? Is it because they have reposed faith repeatedly on Biju Janata Dal time and again since 2000?

The people of Odisha have committed no wrong. Rather, the Union Government by this discrimination is expressing its apathy towards the people of Odisha. This should not happen.

My demand, therefore, is that the Government should sanction a special package for the backward districts of Odisha, which request is pending before them for quite some time. Thank you, Sir.